

IMPULSES AND SCHOOLS OF
PHILOSOPHY 93

His attitude may be wasted. His habits may be upset. Should he chance to meet a woman who disturbs the balance of his emotions by exciting his love.

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To many men an explanation of Life or of Nature appears to be unsatisfactory unless it resolves the complex into the simple. Unless it tends towards the conclusion that the various links between happenings, which we term "causes" are but manifestations of an ultimate unity of purpose. They will condemn as retrogressive—even as absurd—an attempt to account for human behaviour by attributing it to a number of inconsistent and antagonistic impulses. Yet if we review the endeavours which have been made by men of intellect during the past twenty-five centuries to discover the foundations and foresee the ultimate development of human conduct—and in the theories of ethics and political economy, to formulate the aspirations that should guide it—we shall conclude that their ideals have been as numerous and as diverse as the impulses which we have been cataloguing. and may indeed be generally defined as the acceptance of one or other of these impulses as superior in strength or desirability to all others. So Epicureanism idealizes the individualistic impulses. Altruism the social impulses, Stoicism the ethical impulses of self-restraint, Hedonism

the aesthetic impulses of self-
abandonment. We
may in like fashion conclude that
kindliness is
the moral ideal of Christianity. Political
Economy
is concerned with the methods in
which the
provident impulses can be most
effectively satis-
fied. Reason, which as we shall see,
may also
be classed as an impulse, is adopted by
some
philosophers as the guiding star that
will lead